

## Description

# HOCKEY STICK BLADE COVER

### CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] None

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to the sport of hockey in which the players' hockey sticks include a puck propelling blade portion which is subjected to extreme wear and tear and resulting damage and breakage. Since it is typically the blade rather than the handle portion of the hockey stick which experiences the most wear and tear, many sticks are provided with replaceable blades, the blades themselves usually being made of wood, composite or other synthetic materials.

[0003] Hockey players frequently use tapes and adhesives of various types on hockey stick blades. The tapes or adhesives are used for various purposes including repair or to minimize damage encountered during normal play, adjustment of the desired weighting and flexibility of the blade,

and occasionally also for additionally securing a replacement blade to a handle. While this common practice of using tape on hockey sticks is less problematic at professional and other upper levels of hockey competition, it is well-known that taping of hockey stick blades is inevitably messy and leaves an adhesive residue which adheres to the sticks, clothing, and various other materials and articles with which the stick and adhesive may come into contact. The problem is particularly noticeable in lower grades of hockey competition such as youth hockey since younger players are often driven by coaches, relatives and friends to and from the rink sites at which competition takes place. Younger players typically are cost conscious and therefore do not ordinarily incur the cost of expensive travel bags for their hockey sticks. Moreover, young players frequently somewhat carelessly throw their sticks into the car, van, or other transportation vehicle without using any protective cover at all, much less an expensive travel bag. This results in adhesive deposits on the interior surfaces of the transportation vehicles and subsequent transfer of adhesive to clothing of others who may use the vehicle even after the hockey equipment is no longer present.

[0004] Various types of covers for various types of sporting equipment are well known including relatively expensive travel covers such as golf bag covers, tennis racket covers, and hockey stick covers designed to fully enclose one or more hockey sticks. These travel covers usually are provided with adequate padding and protection so that the covers can protect the enclosed equipment from rough baggage handling on airlines and other forms of commercial transportation.

[0005] Partial covers for sports articles are also well-known such as golf club head covers, tennis racket head covers and the like. To date, there are no known partial covers for only enclosing a hockey stick blade to avoid damage to surfaces which it may contact which may be caused by rough, sharp or splintered blade edges and to avoid the transfer of tape or other adhesive typically used on hockey stick blades to such surfaces. The problem of adhesive transfer to other surfaces is believed to be primarily unique to the sport of hockey and the sticks which are used therein.

[0006] A hockey stick blade cover which addresses the above concerns is therefore desired.

#### **BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0007] Disclosed herein is a hockey stick blade cover which is shaped to enclose a hockey stick blade. The closure therefore looks somewhat like a sock including a foot portion having a bottom, a toe, a top and an ankle portion. The foot portion and ankle portion have free edges which may be releaseably secured together to enclose a hockey stick blade by means such as a zipper at the front or back. At least the inner surfaces of the closure are preferably made of a material which resists adherence to adhesive. The cover also may have a ventilating portion to allow for moisture dissipation.

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0008] Figure 1 is a side elevation view of a hockey stick blade cover.

[0009] Figure 2 is a top plan view of the cover of Fig. 1.

[0010] Figure 3 is a cross-section view taken at line 3 – 3 in Fig. 1.

[0011] Figure 4 is a cross-section view taken at line 4–4 in Fig. 1.

#### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

[0012] As seen in Fig. 1, the hockey stick blade cover 10 is shaped in the general configuration of a sock to enclose a hockey stick blade. The cover 10 therefore includes a foot

portion 20 having a bottom 22, a toe 24, a top 26 and an ankle portion 30. The cover also includes abutting free edges 32, 34 which may be fastened together by an attachment means 40 such as a zipper which, in the preferred embodiment shown, is located at the top or instep of the cover. Other forms of attachment means 40 are of course contemplated including hook and eye (VELCRO<sup>®</sup>) type fasteners, laces, and drawstrings. As shown, the attachment means 40 is preferably positioned in the upper surface of the blade cover 10 since this is believed the most convenient and accessible location. The zipper or other type of attachment means 40 could of course be placed at some other location such as the heel and back of the ankle portion 30 and extending a selected distance along part of the bottom 22 of the foot portion 20.

[0013] While the preferred form of cover 10 is comprised of a flexible fabric which may also be stretchable, covers 10 may be constructed which merely have some flexible portions which may or may not be stretchable and some less flexible or even rigid portions.

[0014] In the preferred embodiment, the foot portion 20, which contains the hockey stick blade, preferably has an inner surface which resists adherence to adhesives of the type

typically used by players when taping or otherwise repairing their stick blades. Such surfaces may be formed, for example, of fabric impregnated with polytetrafluoroethylene (TEFLON<sup>®</sup>) or like material. As seen in Figs. 2 and 3, the cover is preferably formed of a pair of flexible side panels 50, 60 each having edges which may be connected along the bottom 22, toe 24, and top 26. The side panels 50, 60 are each preferably comprised two fabric layers 52, 54; 62, 64 which are in turn adhesively adhered to opposite sides of an inner layer 56, 66 of foam rubber or the like. The foam rubber layer may also be provided with perforations to enhance breathability of the side panels to allow ingress/egress of moisture through the fabric layers 52, 64; 62, 64 and inner foam rubber layers 56, 66. Each of the side panels 50, 60 can itself be assembled from two or more separate pieces of material. In the preferred embodiment shown, each side panel 50, 60 includes upper and lower foot pieces which may be of different colors secured to an ankle piece. Each side panel 50, 60 may also include a toe reinforcement panel 28 of non-stretch fabric and a perforated vent panel 58, 68 at the location shown near the upper portion of the toe 24.

[0015] In the preferred embodiments depicted in the drawings,

the side panels 50, 60, or the separate sections thereof, may be attached to each other and to the connecting band 70 by turning their adjoining edges inwardly and then affixing them together by stitching. Depending on the type of materials chosen for construction of the cover 10, other means of affixation may be more advantageous such as, for example, gluing or adhesive welding techniques. Similarly, the attachment means 40 such as the separate tapes of a zipper as depicted or hook and eye (VELCRO<sup>®</sup>) or other attachment means may be affixed by stitching or glue to the side panels 50, 60 as shown so that the spaced free edges 32, 34 which may easily be fastened together to enclose a hockey stick blade. Preferably, the non-structural toe reinforcement panel 28 is provided near the toe 24 to connect the side panels 50, 60 to the band 70 at that location so that the reinforcement panel 28 will reduce wear and damage to the cover 10 which otherwise may be expected when repeatedly inserting a hockey stick blade into the cover 10.

[0016] Persons skilled in the art will readily appreciate that various additional modifications can be made from the presently preferred embodiment thus the scope of protection is intended to be defined only by the limitations of

the appended claims.